

The Presidency---What It Pays and What It Costs

UPWARD of a dozen men have entered the quadrumal race for the presidency. The course over which they will run is strewn with broken hearts and wasted gold. How much will the victor profit by his laurels, and what will they cost him? The purse offered has \$100,000 for the term. This means \$75,000 a year, \$205.48 a day, \$8.56 per waking or sleeping hour.

Such is the wage for the office which George Washington offered to all without pay. When he, the country's father, and his successors, for a half century and more, traveled about on public business they paid the toll-keeper, the innkeeper and the coach driver out of their official salary of \$25,000 a year. Now the government allows a President for yearly travel money a sum equal to that which was paid to all our early Presidents from Washington to Grant. In other words, the President elected this year will be able to draw from the Treasury four times as much in salary and allowances as was given to Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Chief Magistrates of their time; twice as much as was given our Presidents from Hayes to McKinley.

But even at this rate the increase in the presidential salary has not kept pace with the growth of the responsibilities attached to the office.

Servant of Many More Masters.
President Taft is the servant of twenty-four times as many exacting masters as boomed and criticized George Washington. To put it in another way, there are 85,000,000 more citizens supervising Mr. Taft's job than directed that of the country's father. Then, too, the latter's employers had no telegraph news of what he was doing, nor could they get at him very easily, this being on account of inconveniences of travel, for one thing, and his exclusiveness, for another, for it was against his rule to receive a citizen unless he came introduced by a Congressman or some other high official of State.

Besides the purse of \$300,000 and the right to spend, during his term, \$100,000 more in travel money (without giving any account of its use) the winner of the presidential race will be presented with a four-year lease upon the most stately and most famous old colonial mansion upon our hemisphere, upon whose enlargement the government spent \$100,000 ten years ago. The next tenant of the White House will enjoy the conveniences of an office building twice the size of that which Mr. Taft found when he took possession three years ago, for the executive offices have been enlarged under his direction.

Another expansion made upon Mr. Taft's recommendation has been in the salary of the private secretary to the President, now the most tried official upon the government's pay roll. He draws the full pay of a United States Senator, or \$15,000 per year, whereas all Presidents until Buchanan had to pay their secretaries out of their own wage of \$2,500. The first salary allowed a private secretary was \$2,500, or 10 per cent. of the President's pay—the same percentage now allowed Mr. Taft's secretary.

Tribled Since Lincoln's Time.
Thus the remuneration of both the Chief Executive and the head of his office force have been tribled since Lincoln and his faithful Nicolay occupied the White House offices. In the four of the clerks and stenographers in Mr. Taft's office receive as much salary as was allowed John Nicolay, while above them is an executive clerk receiving \$5,000, and a chief clerk drawing \$3,000 a year. At lower pay efficient men could not be kept at their desks in these days. They would soon be tempted away by outside business and financial concerns recognizing that men picked for the President's own office are the cream of the civil service official force.

The pay roll of this force now amounts to \$71,520 a year, and this does not include a contingent fund of \$25,000 annually appropriated for the stationery, record books, telegraph and telephone service, furnishings and conveniences used by the executive office, besides such new books as are needed for the White House library and "miscellaneous items at the discretion of the President." In other words, a sum total of \$96,000 is annually expended at the Chief Magistrate's discretion for traveling expenses and office maintenance.

BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.
His business correspondence goes through the mails free. He has to buy stamps only for private correspondence with his sisters, his cousins and his aunts, or near friends. What he gives a state function there is a messenger at hand to go about town, leaving invitations at the doors of the invited guests.

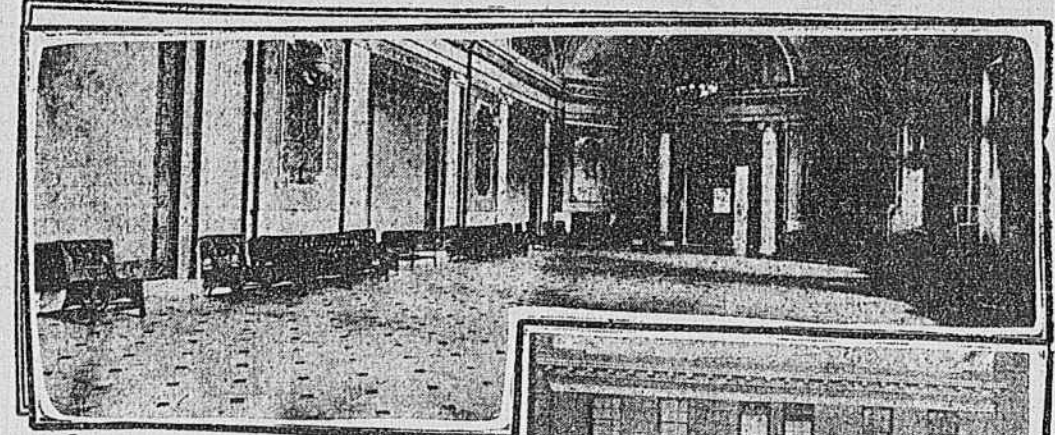
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He has men to read the papers for



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PRESIDENT'S YACHT "MAYFLOWER."

him and clip such items as will interest him, men to answer by formula thousands of letters which he never sees or hears of, men to keep away from him every petty and annoying detail.

The residence portion of the White House offers far greater conveniences to a prospective tenant than Presidents enjoyed until very recent years. Until after the Mexican War the mansion was lighted solely by candles and oil lamps, while there was no central heating or ventilating system until a few years before the Civil War. Water for use in the house was dipped out of a spring beneath what is now the front portico. To-day, however, the most modern systems of electric lighting, heating, ventilation and plumbing are installed, and a colonel of engineers is intrusted with the task of keeping these in repair. Whenever the next mistress of the White House wishes any repair made, any new furniture or new decorations in use shall call upon this officer and he will pay for the improvements out of an annual fund of \$35,000 allowed him for "care," "refurbishing" and "repairs." It has ever been a tradition of both political parties that the President's abode shall look spick and span, that none of the furniture shall show a scratch or a worn spot, that none of the draperies or decorations in use shall be allowed to fade or grow threadbare.

Uncle Sam pays for all this, as well as for all of the fuel, heat, light and flowers used in the house, offices and surrounding grounds, the appropriation

for all of these items during the current year being \$61,600. Of this \$6,000 is used for fuel, \$8,500 for light on the buildings and grounds and \$12,000 for the care, maintenance and repair of the greenhouses, which supply flowers for public and private entertainments as well as for family use and the beautification of the extensive park surrounding the house.

Purchase What They Want.
Out of the flat fund for care, repair and refurbishing past mistresses of the White House have made purchases as they have seen fit. Thus Mrs. Grant purchased for \$1,000 a silver canoe, which still contains flowers at state functions; and thus Mrs. Hayes, for \$15,000, had painted the gaudily flowered china service, which was retired when Mrs. Roosevelt purchased the present Wedgwood service for \$30,000. And it may be added that it was out of this fund that Andrew Jackson bought, at second-hand, the ancestral service of the Russian Baron de Tuiyil. All such articles, of course, become the property of the government and remain in the White House when the purchaser moves out.

So Uncle Sam will take good care of him who carries off the grand prize in the presidential sweepstakes next summer. He will pay a valet to shave him, cut his hair and press his clothes, the maid who waits upon his wife, the groom of his stables, the laundress who cares for the White House linen and the corps of domestics which dusts, scrubs the floor and polishes up the hands of the big front door.

If he keep riding horses he will, as commander-in-chief of the army, be provided with an orderly to fetch and take his mount and accompany him when indulging in equestrian pleasures.

His Military Perquisites.
Indeed, by virtue of his rank as commander-in-chief of both the land and sea forces, he will be entitled to several perquisites not stipulated in the appropriation bills. Handsome among these, perhaps, is the authority to use at any time the yacht *Mayflower* and the corps of 2,000 tons, was originally purchased by Mrs. Ogden Golet for \$800,000, and was sold by her to the government during the Spanish war. Mrs. Roosevelt and her children availed themselves of the use of this for a cruise to Cuba, and Mr. Taft has used it in connection with the naval ceremonies off the Atlantic coast. The smaller yacht, *Sylph*, is more frequently used by the presidential families, especially to avoid the intense heat of summer.

His military rank also entitles the President and family to the free medical attendance and free medicines guaranteed to every officer in either branch of the service. A surgeon will be detailed to reside near the executive household, wherever it may happen to be, and protect his health. When the President travels, he will be entitled to the services of this physician to treat his throat after an ordeal of speechmaking or to take his pulse and temperature upon occasions of exposure or over-exertion. If, by any ill fate, the victor of this year's contest should die in the presidential office, the government will pay for his state funeral and, besides granting his widow a pension of \$5,000 a year, will carry her letters in the mail free of charge.

Wherever he goes he will be entitled to the services of an army or naval officer detailed as his "personal aid," such as is always attached to the admiral of the navy or commanding general of the army.

Will Be His Right Hand.
This officer will be at his right hand day and evening, if he so directs.

Major Archibald Butt, who, in full uniform, is a familiar figure in the background of all snapshots of President Taft, has filled this post with fidelity during the past three years. He is the guardian of the chief executive's memory string, the keeper of his privy purse and the custodian of his engagement calendar. The presidential household is entitled also to the services of young officers, who act as ushers at the official levees. In command of this "social staff" is a master of ceremonies, the same colonel of engineers who exercises a mechanical supervision over the house equipment and appointments.

Whenever next November's victor and his family desire to go out for a spin they will find two big automobiles—one of the limousine type and the other of the touring car type—ready and waiting for them in the executive garage. The head chauffeur who will drive them about receives \$100 a month, and the assistance of a second chauffeur also upon the government pay roll. When the cars wear out Congress will appropriate for new ones. The two now in use cost \$12,000.

Escapes Housekeeping Details.
She who assumes her station as "first lady of the land" next spring will be relieved of all petty details of housekeeping. The government will give her the choice of a bonded steward or a housekeeper to take command of the domestic force and supervise the marketing.

A housekeeper is in command of the Taft cuisine, as was the case during the McKinley regime, while Presidents Cleveland and Roosevelt selected a steward from the government, and who saw that the guests will be brought to the chateau of the mansion by ushers and butlers paid out of the United States calls whatever, unless some foreign ruler brings his wife to Washington and all of the details of her social correspondence will be attended to by her own private secretary.

When she goes upstairs she will be carried by an electric elevator. In moments of leisure she can sit down at a golden piano—a gift to the nation, which cost \$15,000. As she steps from room to room she will inhale the perfume of the rarest of flowers, daily renewed in the vases, and her eye will fall upon articles of virtue presented to the government by several generations of the proud rulers of the world. At her entertainments the Marine Band will discourse whatever music she selects. And many of the great musical geniuses of the world will vie with one another to entertain her guests without cost. Whenever she wishes a bonnet at the theatre one will be provided for her and her guests without cost. In fact, one of the Washington theatres is to be a "social attaché" whose function it is to invite the families of such high functionaries as the President, Vice-President and foreign ambassadors to all his boxes.

White House More Comfortable.
The family which assumes possession of the White House next year will enjoy far greater living space than Mr. Roosevelt and his large family of children found there when they moved in. Thomas Jefferson, the first tenant of the finished building, had the use of an office upon the site where Mr. Taft's now stands, and the White House proper was used for a residence. But later Presidents encroached upon the eastern portion of the mansion for office space until Colonel Roosevelt called a halt and moved the offices and Cabinet room to the new western annex. So the upstairs space now includes

eight bedrooms, with a private bath to each suite; a large library and a study—the former Cabinet room—where the President may now hide himself to escape office-seekers and the daily delegations brought to the executive offices by politicians.

It may be added that the presidency is a safer office than it was a decade ago. An attack upon the life of the chief magistrate is now a Federal offense, and even an unsuccessful attempt to kill him is punishable by death. To prevent, as far as possible, a repetition of the Garfield tragedy, a separate wing of the new Union Station is set apart for the President's use when he passes through that structure, and instead of mingling with the public throng while waiting for his train of conveyance he now has his elegantly furnished private suite, including a reception room and retiring rooms. Moreover, the McKinley tragedy has resulted in a much more ingenious system of espionage over persons approaching the President upon public or state occasions. Since Mr. Roosevelt succeeded to the office the hands of every person approaching the Chief Magistrate upon these public occasions are carefully watched, and near him is stationed a guard, who insists that all hands be taken out of pockets, and whose eyes never leave any package that is in evidence.

Haunted by Worry.
Nevertheless, no man, however brave can assume the presidency without being haunted by the almost unceasing knowledge that somewhere there is a fanatic or a lunatic gunning for him. Mr. Taft seems to have suffered less from this dread than his predecessors—for he has greatly reduced the White House police guard—but the news that someone is apprehended at the White House almost weekly cannot escape the members of his household.

Another burden which will be placed upon the back of November's victor when the laurel is put upon his brow is the suffering inflicted by calamity upon even the most morally courageous of mortals. Washington, while President, was openly charged with being a murderer and a thief, as well as having overdrawn his salary \$5,000, and the most able of his successors have been unjustly branded as brawling drunkards, wife-beaters, rouses and corruptors. Jackson used to say that the slanders uttered against him killed his wife during his campaign. At the White House a disgruntled officeholder once pulled his nose. Temperance strikers suffered forever hounding Cleveland, who during his presidency denounced a preacher-crier as "a disseminator of wholesale lies and calumnies not less stupid than cruel." And McKinley, despite his abstinence, was continually harassed by the same charges. A New York Representative, during the last administration, uttered in the House an absurd calumny which had it that President Roosevelt had angrily struck the horse of a young woman rider, alleged to have crowded him on the road while he was riding. The House expunged this speech from the record, and the mother of the girl wrote a denial of the story.

No detail of the private life of each contestant in this presidential hand-cap will escape public scrutiny during the coming months. All of their ancestors will be dug up, and if any one of them, even to the remotest degree, was ever hanged for stealing sheep, the public will get full details, not to mention plenty of embellishment. An ex-

ample of how far this interest is carried is a newspaper heading which I noted some years ago. It reads: "Dies of Drug in London. Divorced Husband of Roosevelt's Uncle's Stepdaughter a Victim."

Victim of the Curious.
Of this public scrutiny into the affairs of himself and family, the man elected President (especially if he be a new Chief Magistrate) will continue to be a victim during the four years of his term.

Modest Martha Washington had the sanctity of her very bedchamber intruded upon by inquisitive tourists who inspected the first Executive Mansion in New York, and the game has been going on ever since.

The presidency is, of course, an expensive office, in spite of the increased salary and allowances. Colonel Roosevelt is generally supposed to have spent his full salary of \$50,000 a year on entertainment, and some think that he went beyond it. The old state dining-room, as he found it, held forty guests, and by increasing its capacity to over 100 he greatly increased the burden of hospitality to fall upon men possessed of less personal wealth. Each year there have always been three state dinners, and Mr. Taft has added one more. He has also established the ex-

pensive custom of serving a supper at each of the great state receptions. Therefore he must spend more for vands than any of his predecessors. Not having a country home of his own, at a distance convenient to Washington, he has also been put to the extraordinary expenses of renting a summer estate at the seashore, that he might escape the tropical heat of Washington. The item of travel-money allowance given to him and to President Roosevelt was by no means a comparative gain to them, as for generations all of their predecessors were hauled free by the railroads in luxurious private cars. The only financial effect of the new arrangement has been that the railroads and the Federal Treasury.



It does not take much of a figure to figure out that the profits by the presidency (and we have not gone into the items of everlasting fame and enduring glory) more than balance the losses. Thus it is that the most enthusiastic contestants are those who have already won this goal of goals, have heard the chink of the winner's purse in their pockets, and have felt the victor's laurel upon their brows. (Copyright, 1912, by John Elfreth Watkins.)

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